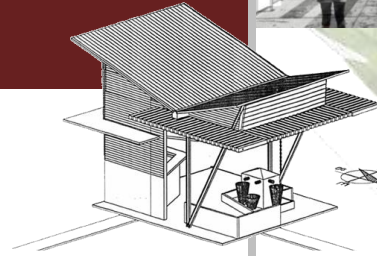




HARVARD AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Harvard graduate school of design
Regional identities and social practices



ARCHITECTURAL SUITES

Kinshasa – Dakar - Douala



Daniele Diwouta-Kotto,
Architect

SUMMARY

1. URBAN LEVEL

- Historical context
- Morphology of the urban centers

2. HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE

- Kinshasa
- Douala
- Dakar

3. THEN & NOW

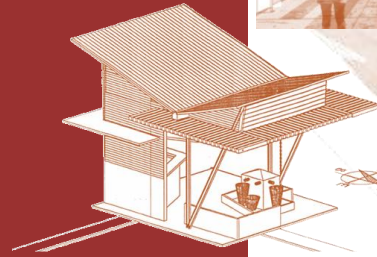
- Douala

4. ACHIEVEMENTS

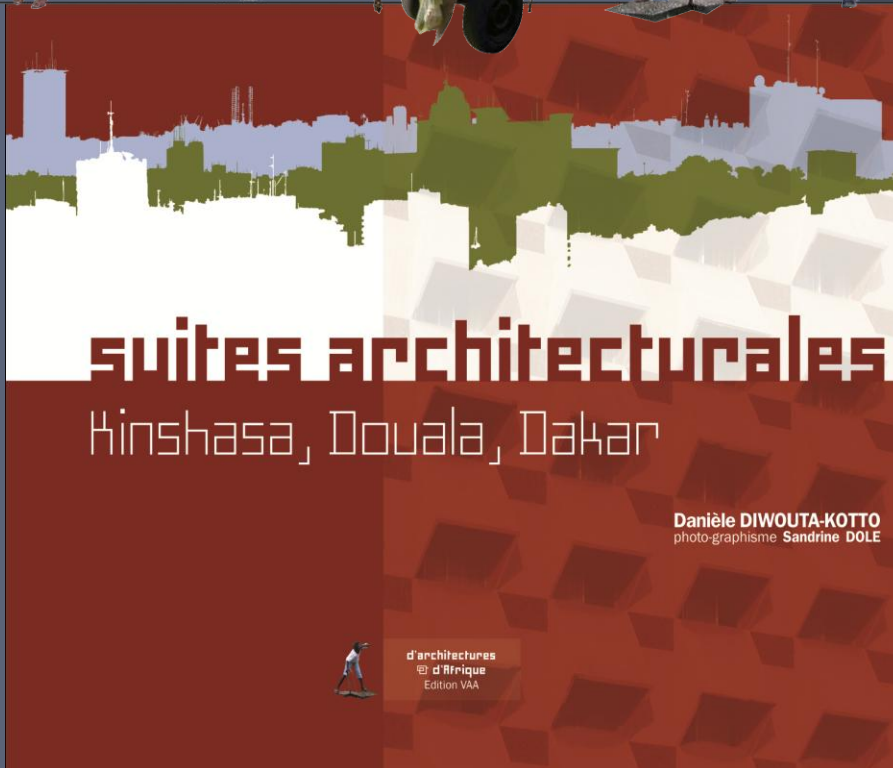
- Recycling & reappropriation

5. TRANSVERSAL VIEWS

- Permanent building sites
- Public spaces
- New indentifications



ARCHITECTURAL SUITES



The Book

Urban mutations of 3 African town-centers since independence

- Illustrations of yesterday and today
- Typologies of architectural heritage
- Renovations, conversions and extensions will preserve these buildings at the same time bestowing on new functions
- Urban identity created by this part of history. Published in by VAA 2010

1

URBAN LEVEL

-  Kinshasa
-  Dakar
-  Douala

At first Europeans traders found some **villages and kingdoms**. The living environment was growing from the activities between them and the Africans.

Later on, **the traders became occupants and changed the view** of this space of life.

That was the birth of cities from the European point of view.

The towns-centers are the core of the ideology of the occupants.

These cities were fashioned by the will of the government and deliberately pointed towards the colonial metropolis.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1890 Estuary river Bank

BIRTH OF TOWNS

19 th century Dakar river Bank

1883 Station - Port

Kinshasa (D.C.CONGO)

XV° century: Accosting of Portuguese travellers on the bank, where the Kingdom of Congo was founded since the XIII° century

Douala (CAMEROON)

XV° century: Arrival of the Portuguese on the estuary administrated by Douala Kingdoms.
XVII to XIX° century: Business with Germans and British

Dakar (SENEGAL)

XVIII° century: Lebou Village was implanted on the coast before the foundation of Dakar city

MORPHOLOGY OF THE URBAN CENTERS

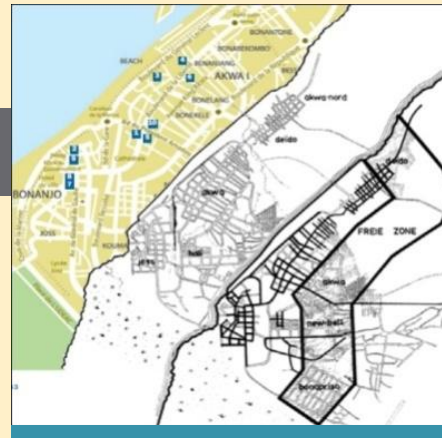
Ambitious & monumental urban planning

1881-82:

The city is named Leopoldville in honor of the King of the Belgians.

1960: Independence: 400,000

2010: more than 10 M people



Functional town planning Architecture of trading

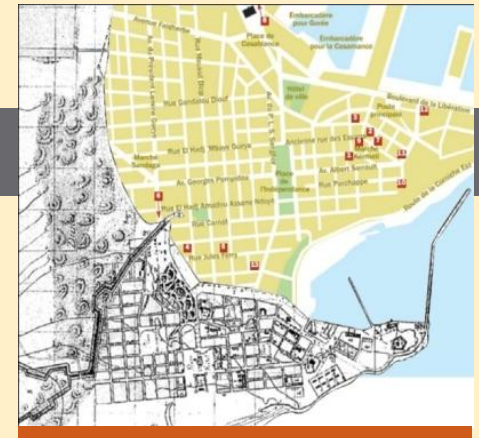
1884-1918: Kamerun becomes Douala.

German period

1918 - 1960: English and French Period.

1960: Independence: 150 000

2010: more than 3 M inhabitants



Strategic Town Transposition of a provincial French spirit.

1857: Foundation of Dakar by France.

1960: Independence: 300,000.

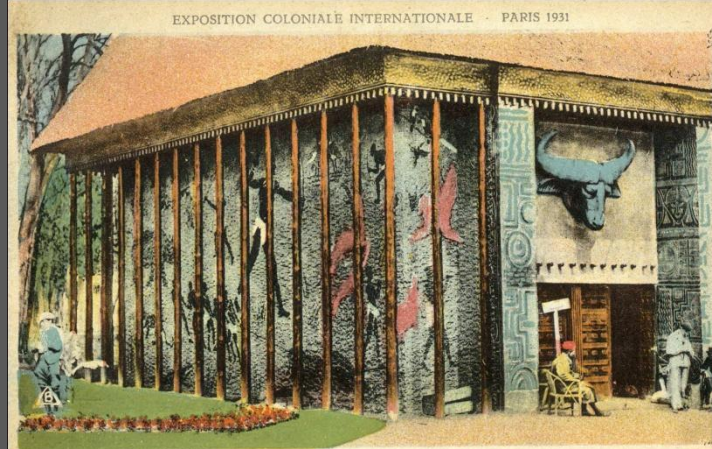
2010: more than 3 M inhabitants.

2 HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURES

The traditional architectures were displayed at the International Colonial Exposition held in Paris in 1931. Those aspects were proudly showed as discoveries. But the interest was limited to an ethnological perspective.

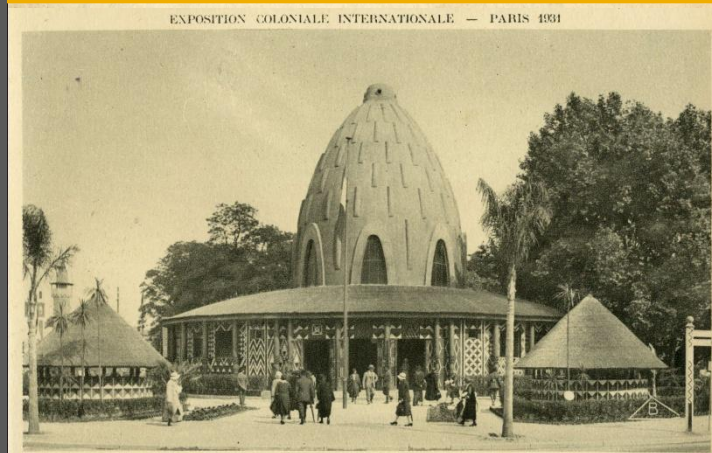
Colonial cities were edified only on type of occupation. New African cities were very fertile experimental grounds for a transposition of architectures

The cultures of the various Europeans colonies can be read on the walls.



3087. - Cameroun - Togo - Le Pavillon de la Chasse - LEFEUVRE, peintre

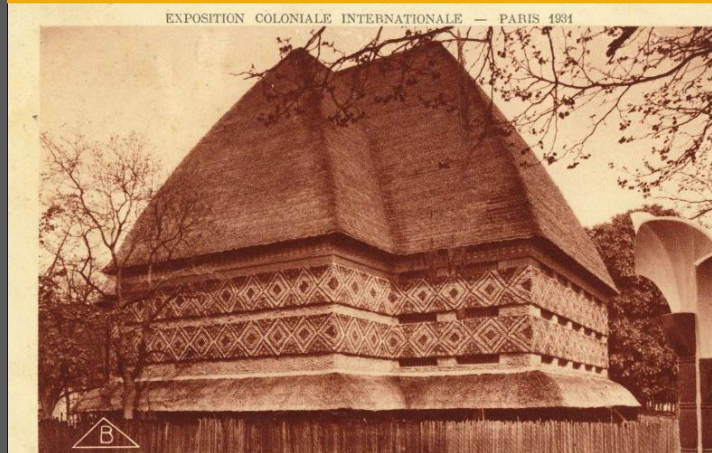
Bamileke
Head house



3 1/2 PAVILLON DE L'AFRIQUE EQUATORIALE FRANÇAISE

L. A. Fichet, Arch.

Mosgoum
House



402 CAMEROUN TOGO — GRAND PAVILLON

Boileau et Carrière, Architectes

Togo roof

HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURES

KINSHASA ° DOUALA ° DAKAR

TPOLOGY



Declension of frontons

- Typical Belgium pediment on industrial building made in bricks
- Superposing rigid fronton with “novel art” ornament ironworks
- Central rounded fronton on classic progressing of arcades and columns

CONTRAST

Around the Sozacom termit nest (1977)

Contrast scales between the last horizontal colonial edifices and the rough verticality surroundings



HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURES

KINSHASA ° DOUALA ° DAKAR

TPOLOGY

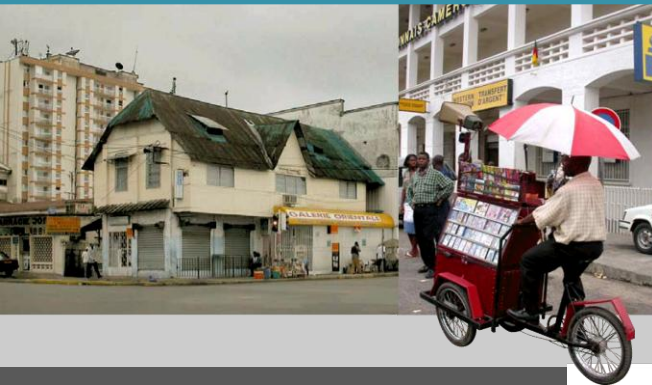
Succession of periods

- Domestic regional architectures
- Public edifices (Post, Law Courts) in a rationalist style

CONTRAST

Details

- Different balconies which sign their building period
- Conciliatory between emblematic historic public edifice and private head office



HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURES

KINSHASA ° DOUALA ° DAKAR



TYOLOGY

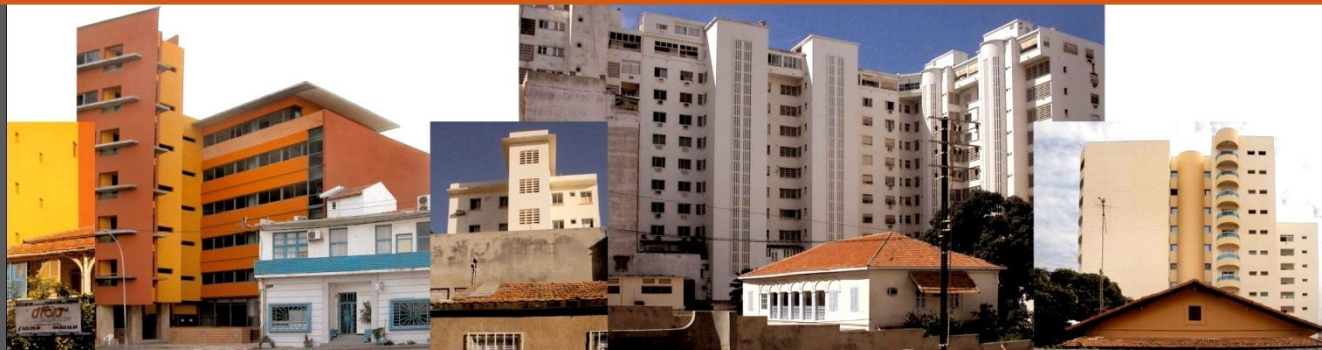
From classic to modern style

- Classic progressing in these geometric elevations
- Rounded angles and lined sunbreakers in concrete give them a modern rhythm

CONTRAST

Colours and heights

- White basic colonial painting and today explosion colors on fronts
- Deferment for the old small houses of Dakar center which disappears for flats buildings



3

THEN & NOW DOUALA



Intertwined architectures which has remained the purely functional town it was **firstly conceived for**.

A city **so urban** but where **rural life** is always in balance.

The **permanent degradation of buildings and roads** is a continuous state, that **everyone has to make do with**.

The motorbikes-riders called “bensikin” and the invasion of advertising, have given another scale of limits and a **tempo of an overactive city**.

The city seems to find its way in this creative confusion. **Everywhere is a marketplace**.

THEN & NOW

INTERTWINED ARCHITECTURES

DOUALA

The former framework itself superposed on a rural web is exceed by the new codes of a modernity running wild.

AKWA Downtown

Main Boulevard de la Liberté, with its water tank and trees before and the permanent “go slow” now

Intensification of advertising and traffic

Closed terraces and free pedestrians walks



4

ACHIEVEMENTS RECYCLING & (RE)APPROPRIATION

The present replaced the past

Today, the central core has been preserved as is, and the building have integrated into the environment through a series of changes.

These buildings have shown a remarkable capacity for transformation according new uses.

These works are important, because they represent a **counter-current to the homogenization that threatens architecture.**



ACHIEVEMENTS

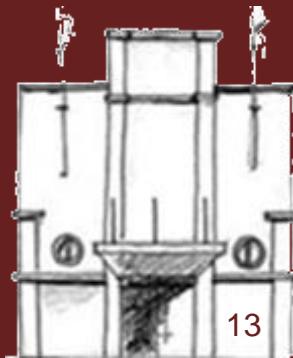
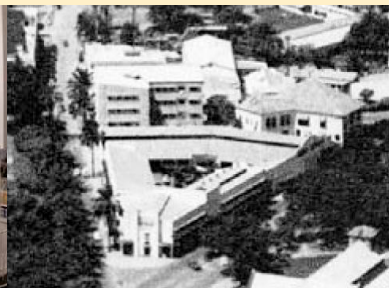
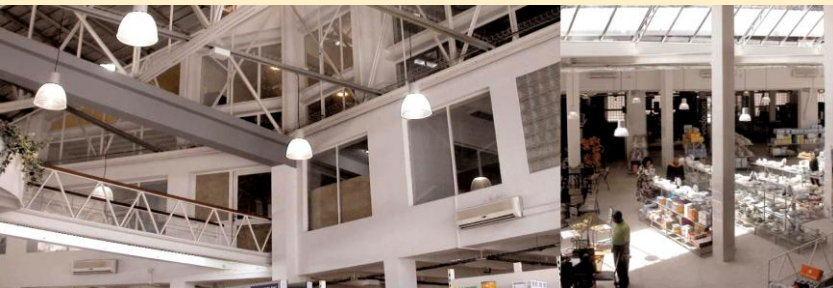
HANSON Mall - Kinshasa Architect: M. Paquet



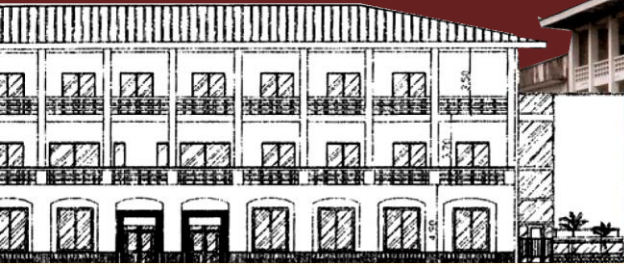
Spirit ship from 1940 like modern architecture of this period in Europe.

Conservation and upgrading of the prime use as urban supermarket.

Area: 2000 sqm
Period: 2005-06



ACHIEVEMENTS



SCB Bank Head Office - Douala

Architect: D. Diwouta Kotto



Originally, the main building of this set is a German hotel built in the years 1910.



Since its acquisition they were many rehabilitations and extensions.

The last objective was to create a continuity between the different buildings made at different times.

Victoria offices - Douala

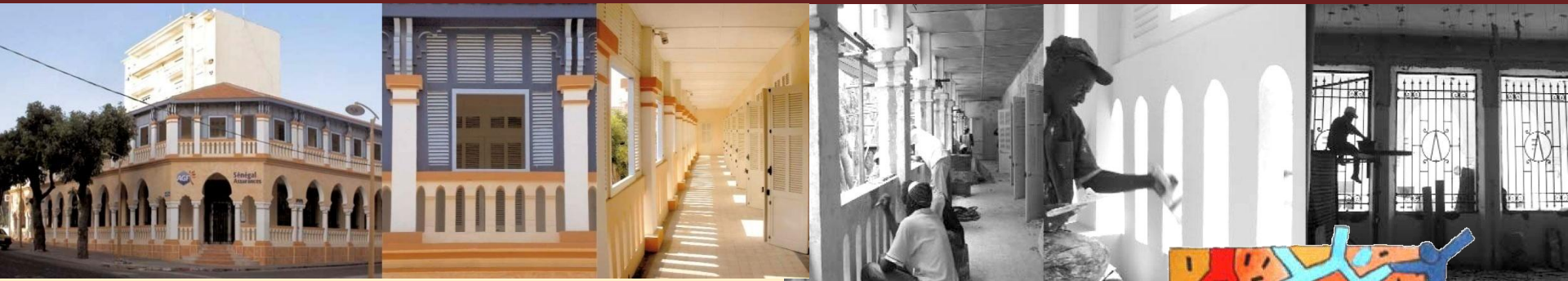
Typical small building of the German colonial times, built in mud bricks and often destroyed to make towers.

For this parcel, the owner choose to implement a building of 7 floors in the back and preserve the front.

Rehabilitation and development for law offices.
Area: 350 sqm
Period : 2004-05

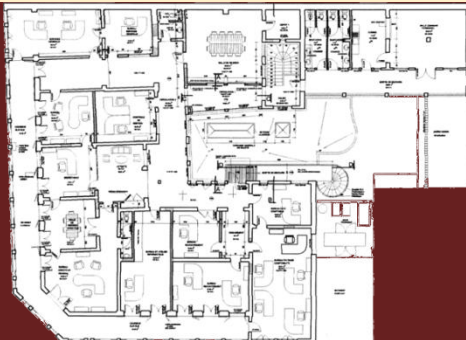


Architects: AGG, D. Diwouta Kotto



Allianz head office - Dakar

GA2D-Andrée Diop Depret



Built in the 1910s, classified UNESCO, it is a fine example of restoration combined with a functional redevelopment.

Area: 1500sqm
Period: 2005-06



Public market Kermel - Dakar

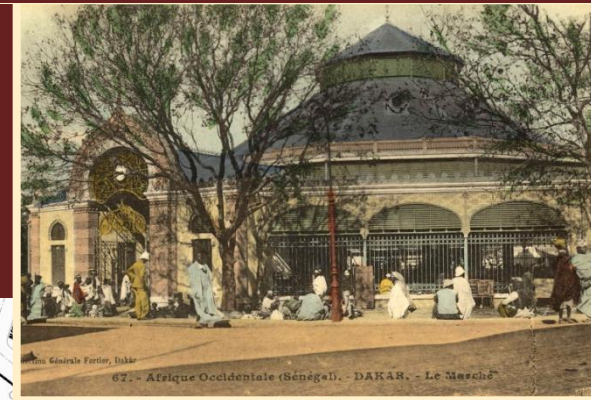
GLAI - Groupement Luxembourgeois Architectes et Ingénieurs

Built in 1908, burned in 1993, rebuilt at the request of users.

Technical facilities have been modernized and a basement was created.

Area: 2500sqm

Period: 1996-97





PERMANENT BUILDING SITES

Building sites in Africa, often take a very long time to be completed and are abandoned halfway, to be continued later.

5

TRANSVERSE VIEWS



PUBLIC SPACES

Everywhere in Africa, the same feeling of incomplete town planning. All the free spaces are occupied by informal activities.

NEW IDENTIFICATIONS

The absorption of foreign styles is a **permanent fact**. New architecture models are based on what is perceived as being modern in the emerging countries.



These deserted sites are the storerooms of cities, in a parallel to the traditional villages. They are prides for the beholder who thinks "I built, therefore I am".

PERMANENT BUILDING SITES

PUBLIC SPACES

TRANSVERSE VIEWS

The limit between public and private space is thin.



Water, shoes, clothes, food and drinks, CDs, phone cards...

Dar es salaam, Addis Ababa, Ouagadougou

NEW IDENTIFICATIONS



This dream of modernity does not make us forget that the dominant fact is the no-architecture, built without any standard, only motivated by their basic functionality.

Thank you for your attention

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